

Your Faith has made you well

The gospel for this coming Sunday (Eighteenth Sunday after Pentecost) is Luke 17:11-19. This is the story of the ten lepers. Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem to carry out his saving work on the cross.

Jesus deliberately went into this village, almost certainly because he wanted to encounter people to whom he could minister. Outside of the village he encounters 10 lepers. According to the requirements of the Law (Lev 13:46; Num 5:2-4), these 10 lepers would have been outside of the village, and would have had to warn Jesus that they were unclean before they approached him.

The lepers cry out “*have mercy on us.*” (v. 13) This is a cry for salvation. This is Lukan vocabulary for God’s gracious visitation of release for those who are in bondage to sin, death, sickness, and demon possession. The lepers begged for mercy as they saw Jesus approach their city; mercy wrought their salvation, salvation that comes through faith. (CC p. 652)

The occasion for the miracle is that Jesus “sees” the lepers and then speaks to them. Jesus responds to their imperative plea for mercy with an imperative of his own: “Go” is an imperative and that directs the lepers to go to the priest to show that they were healed. The irony here is this: the ten lepers were happy to journey to the temple with the expectation that they would be cleansed.

Only one leper, *after the cleansing*, was willing to return to give glory to God—God in the person of Jesus. The chief irony is this: the one who returns is a “foreigner,” a Samaritan, an outcast!

We are plagued by the leprosy of sin that is a part of the fallen creation. Christ shows God’s ultimate mercy by cleansing all mankind. He did this by dying and rising again. He reminds us of that salvation won for us by daily forgiving our sins. He strengthens our faith by Word and Sacrament. In his eyes we are clean because of the faith he has given us.

The Lord not only cleans our leprosy but also provides many ways that we can show that we are grateful, beginning with thanking him in our prayers. Also, we can ask him to see ways that we can show that thankfulness by helping others.

Prayer: Thanks be to you, O God, as we go our way, made whole by Jesus. Amen. (TLSB)